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SUBJECT: SRAP HOLBROOKE'S JUNE 5 MEETING WITH FM QURESHI

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: SRAP Holbrooke met with Foreign Minister Qureshi, Foreign Secretary Bashir and other Foreign Office officials on January 5. Qureshi said Pakistan was united under Zardari's civilian government, as the ongoing Pakistan military campaign to defeat the Taliban in Swat valley and neighboring areas had gained the support of the populace. Qureshi and Holbrooke agreed on the need for a high-level UN Humanitarian Coordinator to be appointed to improve assistance coordination for the internally displaced. They also agreed the current success of the military offensive and the popular support for it could wither if IDPs did not return quickly. Qureshi asked for help in activating the EU on trade issues, particularly on GSP plus; Bashir asked that the U.S. weigh in with Singapore to upgrade the GOP's status in ASEAN. Holbrooke pledged to meet with EU Ambassadors and to look into the ASEAN matter. The GOP is willing to engage with India, said Qureshi, noting this would be made easier if India was able to "give up its obsession" with the Mumbai terror attacks. When Qureshi noted that Pakistan wanted to ensure the USG was comfortable with China's development plans in Afghanistan, Holbrooke asked the GOP to tell the Chinese that Pakistan would welcome USG-China cooperation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Qureshi asked that the GOP be kept informed as the U.S. and NATO military ramp up operations in RC-South, given the likelihood it would increase Taliban movement into the Waziristans. End Summary.

Moment of National Unity

¶2. (C) SRAP Holbrooke met with Foreign Minister Qureshi, Foreign Secretary Bashir and other Foreign Office officials at the Foreign Office on January 5. Qureshi's main theme was that the nation was finally united, as the ongoing Pakistan military campaign to defeat the Taliban in Swat valley and neighboring areas has gained popular support. Qureshi attributed this success to the civilian government's decision to discuss the need for a national counter-terrorism strategy in Parliament. Together with Prime Minister Gilani's convocation of an All Parties Conference on the matter, which brought on board more than forty political leaders including those not part of the ruling coalition, the process had built cross-party unity and support for the military offensive. (Comment: While there may be more popular support for Pakistan's military operations against insurgents, the

picture of total national unity painted by Qureshi is perhaps exaggerated, as many of the refugees we met with blamed the Pakistani military) not the Taliban) for their current plight. End comment.)

¶3. (C) The military have defeated the Taliban in many areas, said Qureshi, and will continue to fight to complete the job. At the same time, the populace, which formerly may have been ambiguous about the role of the Taliban, had united behind the military offensive. This was equally significant proof that the civilian government could gain full public support, including among the Pashtun populace, for the military offensive. Plans to maintain a military cantonment in Swat and Malakand have been made by the military, said Kayani. Holbrooke asked Qureshi to confirm reports from Army Chief of Staff (COAS) Kayani that the police force in Swat had been destroyed; the FM concurred. Holbrooke noted Kayani's position that the GOP does not want USG support in providing security forces for Swat, but would welcome assistance on the civilian side. "This was fine," said Holbrooke, "the U.S. would make a contribution where it is of use."

¶4. (C) Success on the battlefield and in driving the Taliban out of Swat and neighboring regions, said Qureshi, would be wasted if Pakistan failed to win the "hearts and minds" campaign. That campaign would be based on the success (or failure) of the GOP to provide economic resources to the affected regions. National unity in support of the civilian government, and the military offensive, would be lost if the local populations failed to prosper after suffering human and

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economic losses, said Qureshi.

"Changing the Mood" of Donor Nations

¶5. (C) Qureshi expressed his gratitude to the USG for its own pledges at the Tokyo donor conference, the humanitarian assistance provided to help internal refugees, the diplomatic capital spent to lobby other nations to assist Pakistan, and for hosting the Trilateral Summit. The Tokyo conference and the Trilateral Summit had "served to change the mood" toward Pakistan among nations, he said. Plans to invite the Energy Minister to the next Trilateral proved that the relationship was not based solely on security but addressed other issues, such as trade, commerce, water and energy.

¶6. (C) Progress was made with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, said Qureshi. Qureshi noted media coverage which criticized the signing of the MOU in Washington, given that transit trade is an agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Foreign Minister said he had made presentations to Parliament explaining the benefits of the agreement for Pakistan and would be meeting with Pakistani senators to convey the same message.

Standing up to the Taliban

¶7. (C) A sea change had taken place in the public's willingness to stand up to the Taliban, said Qureshi. Previously, the population, including in Swat, had been fearful of speaking against the Taliban. To do so, he said, was to risk one's life. But the military campaign had changed this dynamic. (Note: The IDPs we spoke to in the refugee camps did not indicate that everyone felt this way, as many blamed the Pakistani military for their current plight.) Qureshi maintained the link between Al Qaeda, Tehrik-i-Taliban and some of the other illegal organizations had been made clear. Now people were speaking out, in the print media, on television, and in conversation -- and discrediting the Taliban and their violence. Qureshi himself had gone to Multan (the Foreign Minister is also a Sufi

saint) and delivered a message of religious moderation that condemned suicide bombing as counter to the Koran. The Secretary, noted Holbrooke, had been most impressed by the Foreign Secretary's pledge to take such action when they had met in Washington. "I didn't just say I would do it," said Qureshi, "it is already done."

¶8. (C) Work remained, however, cautioned Qureshi -- including on Madrassa reform, border control and stemming illegal arms flows. The U.S. could help on the latter two. He lamented that extremist Hafiz Saeed had been released by the Lahore High Court (reported septel) but said the judiciary was independent. Pakistan would have to guard against illegal organizations cropping up under new names providing networks for the Taliban or other extremists.

¶9. (C) Foreign Secretary Bashir and FM Qureshi also underscored the need for coordination between the USG and Pakistan on any increase in US attacks against insurgents in Southeast Afghanistan, as it would likely push more insurgents into Waziristan. Holbrooke said he expected communication between Ambassadors Patterson and Eikenberry from Kabul that would keep Pakistan informed of USG/NATO intentions in the border region.

"Relief, RETURN, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction"

¶10. (C) The GOP would be guided by its "three Rs" policy to manage humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced populations -- "relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction," said Qureshi. Holbrooke suggested adding an 'R' for 'return.'" Having visited the camps for the internally

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displaced on June 3, Holbrooke told Qureshi and the Foreign Office staff assembled that the GOP had done a good job in managing the humanitarian crisis. No one in the camps was "starving, or dying, or asking why they were there," as he had witnessed in other nations. "Everyone knows why they are there," said Holbrooke, "and they want to return home."

¶11. (C) Qureshi again thanked the USG for its humanitarian assistance for the internally displaced and underscored the importance of rehabilitation and reconstruction to making the military operation a long-term success. He added that it was the Pakistani people, not the GOP, who had shouldered the burden. Eighty percent of the displaced persons were being sheltered by Pakistanis, relatives or not. Qureshi added that some 24-25 thousand people had already returned and that the GOP wanted the displaced to return as soon as possible, not least due to concerns that with the hot weather, the risk of disease spreading in the camps was higher the longer the people remained in them.

Senior UN Humanitarian Coordinator Needed

¶12. (C) Qureshi told Holbrooke the GOP had decided a strong UN Humanitarian Coordinator was needed to improve upon the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the displaced. FS Bashir issued a caveat -- the Humanitarian Coordinator could not have the title of SRSG nor a mandate to investigate broader human rights and international humanitarian law issues in Pakistan. Holbrooke agreed that a senior UN Humanitarian Coordinator must be appointed, and noted elevating a UN official already resident in Islamabad was insufficient. PRM/ECA Director Nagy stressed that a Coordinator would be needed to meet upcoming needs of the displaced.

¶13. (C) Ambassador Patterson explained that a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur for the Internally Displaced, Walter Kalin, had been proposed but this was unrelated to the Humanitarian Coordinator. She and Holbrooke said that matter

was a separate issue to be decided by the GOP and the UN.

EU Summit

¶14. (C) Qureshi asked for Holbrooke's help in institutionalizing a yearly EU-Pakistan Summit. He pledged to share any Pakistan draft statements but mostly asked for Holbrooke's help in stimulating ongoing EU interest in Pakistan, particularly trade access. Holbrooke pledged to meet with EU Ambassadors in Washington and did so on June 10. He also agreed to reach out to European Foreign Ministers including Carl Bildt of Sweden and Bernard Kouchner of France. Qureshi said Spain had already expressed interest in holding a Summit with Pakistan during its EU Presidency; Bildt was also engaged.

Improving Relations with India

¶15. (C) Qureshi said Pakistan was willing to engage with India, but it would be difficult of the Indians hinged everything on &its obsession with Mumbai." This was not to imply that the GOP would not pursue the Mumbai matter, but the GOI had set an ill-defined standard of compliance. The new government in India was stronger than the last; Qureshi took this as a positive signal. Bashir asked about USG attendance at a meeting in Moscow and hinted that both President Zardari and Indian PM Singh would be there.

Afghan Civilian Deaths and Drones

¶16. (C) The loss of civilian life through U.S. military action in Afghanistan was on the top of Holbrooke's list, he said. The effects of such actions rippled through and across

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into Pakistan. Qureshi tried to compare this problem to the loss of civilian life caused by drone attacks in Pakistan but Holbrooke rejected Qureshi's charge, saying the two could not be compared, as drones were more targeted than bombs.

Foreign Office Help with Visas and Armored Cars

¶17. (C) Holbrooke and the Ambassador asked Qureshi for help in breaking bureaucratic logjams on the issuance of Pakistani visas to official Americans and to the release of armored vehicles for Embassy use. Qureshi said he would have the Foreign Office weigh in; he thought it nonsensical that the GOP was delaying entry of the vehicles.

ASEAN

¶18. (C) Bashir and Qureshi asked Holbrooke for help in moving Singapore to accept a greater role for Pakistan in ASEAN; Holbrooke pledged to look into the matter.

China/Pakistan relations

¶19. (C) In a surprising line of inquiry, Bashir asked if there was any USG opposition to Chinese development activity in Afghanistan or cooperation with Pakistan there. Holbrooke said there was not. He added that the USG intended to step up its engagement with China in Kabul, noting that Ambassador Eikenberry is a fluent Mandarin speaker. He expressed his disappointment that China did not make a donation at the Tokyo Donor's conference but he acknowledged that China and Pakistan had a strong bilateral relationship. Bashir indicated that Pakistan wanted to be sure the U.S. was comfortable with China's role in Afghanistan. In response, Holbrooke urged Bashir (and Qureshi) to tell the Chinese

encouraged Sino/American cooperation in the region.

¶20. (SBU) Participants: SRAP Holbrooke, Ambassador Patterson, Major General Burton Field, SRAP Chief of Staff Rosemarie Pauli, Special Advisor Ashley Bommer, Special Assistant Kimberly McClure, Economic Advisor Mary Beth Goodman, USAID Advisor Beth Dunford, NSC Director for South Asia Anish Goel, PRM/ECA Director Eleanor Nagy and A/Polcouns Kirsten Schulz (notetaker). Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Secretary Bashir, Spokesman Abdul Basit, Americas Director Sohail Khan and other Foreign Office staff.
PATTERSON